**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**Contracts Finder**

Agreement Reference No:

Lots Covered:

Customer: **Department for Transport**

Start date:

Date response required: **12 April 2024**

Dear Supplier,

We would like to notify you of an upcoming requirement, and by doing so we are keen to understand where the market stands in terms of our requirement below. This Request for Information (RFI) seeks information relating to provision of technology services for the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and Analyse Bus Open Data Service (ABODS).

Please note the following general conditions:

* This RFI will help us to refine the requirements.
* We reserve the right not to proceed with a further competition. Nothing shall constitute a commitment unless we undertake a procedure or further competition that results in the award of a Call-Off Contract.
* Should a Call-Off Agreement be awarded following a further competition, the potential provider shall agree to supply the services in accordance with the appropriate Call-Off Terms contained within the framework agreement.
* All costs associated with the production of such a response either to this RFI or a further competition must be borne by the supplier. We will not contribute in any way to meeting production costs of any response.
* No down-selection of potential providers will take place because of any responses or interactions relating to this RFI.
* We expect that all responses to this RFI will be provided by potential providers in good faith to the best of their ability in the light of information available at the time of their response.
* No information provided by a potential provider in response to this RFI will be carried forward, used, or acknowledged in any way for the purpose of evaluating the potential provider, in any subsequent formal procurement process.

# CURRENT SITUATION

The DfT is the responsible party for the running of the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and Analyse Bus Open Data Service (ABODS). The services were set-up following the 2017 Bus Services Act, with Section 18 detailing powers to request information about the provision of local bus services across England, and the enactment of that Act by the 2020 Public Service Vehicle Open Data Regulations, which detailed the requirements for data sharing by bus operators.

The legislation and service aim to make openly available complete, timely, and accurate timetable, fares, real-time and punctuality data for all local bus services across the country. The Analyse Bus Open Data Service (ABODS) provides free-to-access reporting and analytics to operators and authorities nationally (covering real time Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) feed monitoring, on-time performance, corridor reporting and vehicle journeys analysis). From its inception the aim was for the service to become part of the critical national infrastructure and was therefore designed with scalability and resilience in mind.

BODS is a critical part of delivering a seamless, integrated and affordable public transport system and leading passenger experience for citizens, tourists, students and business leaders alike. The delivery and continuation of the service also delivers benefits for the wider public, operators and the DfT. The timely and accurate reporting of the aforementioned data also opens local markets for public transit and mapping app developers, such as Google and Apple, to provide useful products for public transport users stimulating utilisation of the integrated public transport network, ensuring journeys are smarter, greener and faster. In turn this should contribute to reversing long-term trends in declining bus patronage, providing a financial benefit to operators and countering emissions as fewer private vehicle journeys are undertaken.

The Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and Analyse Bus Open Data Service (ABODS) are currently supported by two suppliers. The DfT is responsible for the letting of the contracts for the delivery of the service, ensuring requirements are met as enshrined in legislation by the 2017 Bus Services Act and 2020 Public Service Vehicle Open Data Regulations. For a new iteration of the service the DfT will also be looking for ongoing innovative approaches and continuous improvement.

# WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

BODS has been running since 2020 and providing benefits to operators, passengers, including underserved communities and members of the public, and progression of the carbon reduction agenda.

The DfT wish to continue and enhance running of the service, including continuous improvement, service desk, business change and potentially additional features and functionality. The platform and reporting should progressively improve over time for the benefit of operators and passengers.

Work will always be completed in line with the UK government Technology Code of Practice and GDS Service Manual service standard with the expectation that user research and testing to be carried out as required to ensure new needs are identified and developed.

# WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The current contracts for delivery of the operational and maintenance services to support the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and Analyse Bus Open Data Service (ABODS) are coming to an end. The DfT are looking to run an open fair and robust procurement process to ensure continuity and improvement of the service, replacing the existing contracts with one single contract covering both the Bus Open Data Service (BODS) and Analyse Bus Open Data Service (ABODS). The DfT will permit sole submissions and consortia submissions.

The supplier can provide:

* Industry standard service uptime excluding planned maintenance periods
* Continuous improvement utilising standard DDaT roles and capabilities
* Service desk support levels 1-3 covering initial triage through to technical resolution
* Business change support. For instance, support and guidance for operators and local authorities to enable compliance around data publishing.

The supplier would be expected to demonstrate compliance against or certification of the following:

* Accessibility Standards
* ISO 27001
* Cyber Essentials Plus

**Questions to be answered:**

1. Can you provide key lessons learnt, risks and opportunities from delivery and support of other open data platform projects which should be accounted for in the requirements for this service?
2. What is your approach to ways of working, including delivery of analytics services, with:
   1. the bus industry
   2. local authorities
   3. SMEs
   4. sub-contractors
   5. the Department for Transport?
3. What approach and considerations do you take to working with transport data standards?
4. What approach would you take to partnering, knowledge sharing and representation on behalf of a contracting organisation for similar services? And what lessons have you learnt?
5. What is your typical approach to transition and knowledge transfer both in taking over and exiting a data platform and / or analytics service?
6. The DfT’s aspiration, aligned to government best practice, is for solutions to be developed open by default. What is your approach to development, IP retention and sharing for your solutions?

**Please respond to the above questions at the earliest opportunity. Responses should be no longer than 8 sides of A4 maximum.**

# OUR TIMETABLE

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| **DATE** | **ACTIVITY** |
| 28 March 2024 | Publication of the Request for Information |
| 28 March 2024 | Clarification period starts |
| 08 April 2024 | Clarification period closes |
| 09 April 2024 | Deadline for the publication of responses to RFI  Clarification questions |
| 12 April 2024 | Deadline for submission of a RFI Response |
| 17-19 April 2024 | Analysis of RFI responses |
| 22 April 2024 | Confirm next steps to RFI Respondents |
| 15 May 2024 | Supplier Day (Venue TBC) |

# QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

* Only Potential Providers who submit a response to this RFI will be invited to a subsequent supplier day. However, not responding to the RFI won’t restrict Potential Providers from submitting a bid in response to the ITT.
* Potential Providers may raise questions or seek clarification regarding any aspect of this RFI document at any time prior to the Response Deadline. Questions must be submitted via Email – Jason.thrupp@dft.gov.uk
* Each question will be responded to separately.
* To ensure that all Potential Providers have equal access to information regarding this Procurement, responses to questions raised by Potential Providers will be published to all parties who confirm interest via Email throughout the period where the RFI is live.
* Responses to questions will not identify the originator of the question.
* If a Potential Provider wishes to ask a question or seek clarification without the question and answer being published in this way, then the Potential Provider must notify us and provide its justification for withholding the question and any response. If we do not consider that there is sufficient justification for withholding the question and the corresponding response, the Potential Provider will be invited to decide whether:
* the question/clarification and the response should in fact be published; or
* It wishes to withdraw the question/clarification.

# GENERAL CONTACT POINT FOR THIS RFI

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| **RFI Lead** |  |
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